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Huom! Tämä on rinnakkaistallenne.

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The Power of Networking

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Let's start from the very basics.

What is a network?

Network is a web-like structure that consists of nodes linked to each other. Nodes are defined as "a point in a network or diagram at which lines or pathways intersect or branch" by Oxford dictionary. Basically, nodes are the endpoints for lines that connect them. On each node, there can be multiple lines, and nodes can be connected with more than one line. Together nodes and lines create a formation, a network. In this network we are the nodes, you and I, the people.

Networking is the act of creating more lines to connect more nodes that will eventually create a bigger formation, a network.

The importance of networking

People network all the time, mostly unknowingly. There are obvious ways of networking through networking tools like social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or even Tinder. However, there are often overlooked ways of networking such as saying hi to your neighbor on your morning stroll or talking with your colleagues in a workplace coffee room. To make it clear – networking isn't only for workplace nor is it only for financial gain. Networking is life itself, the whole social dimension.

Your network of social contacts starts with your immediate family, extends to the people close to you, and in layers outwards after that. In that network you share your joys and sorrows, good times and bad. Birthdays, funerals, and everything between.

In the network information flows, and in that information is the very essence of what we are and what we do, especially when we are not personally physically around. The idea, the mental image, the reputation lives and evolves constantly in that network. It's not really something you actively do; it's how you behave and how you live your life. Thinking about networking is a way of acknowledging its existence and effects.

Where to network?

Looking back, you'll find that most of the networking outside immediate family was done during school years, at daycare or at workplaces. That's very likely because in those situations we all share the same frame, same goals, and are physically almost forced to occupy the same physical spaces, the corners of the workplace or school. It's easy, it happens naturally. It's a socially accepted norm to know your classmates.

But what epic story starts with "this one time I got assigned to this group task with my random classmate"? Not that many. What about "during my travels in the mountains I came across this weird fellow who…"? I don't know but I'd love to hear more.

Every social interaction is a possible networking moment. Feel like you want to send a message to that one person who you know has a funny taste in music? Do it. Wondering why your neighbor never starts a conversation? Initiate it yourself. Over 30 and want to start skateboarding but don't really know where and how? That's me! I asked, got instructions, got into a class. Six months later I'm a part of 39 strong adventurous and fun group of adult skateboarders, in my hometown, that I had no clue existed.

Stop thinking about networking as a business practice and start making that node of yours loud and proud. Make it shine, broadcast your being, dance, and wave. We're here, let us know you are too.

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